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ABSTRACT

Given the importance of mentoring in the academic context and in light of the weaknesses of previous research, this study proposed five objectives. Analyses of surveys from 145 students across 12 universities and diverse disciplines revealed first of all, a demographic profile of the typical graduate student protege and faculty mentor. Second, 10 diverse communication strategies emerged that demonstrate how students initiate a mentoring relationship. Third, protege evaluations of their initiation attempts revealed their efforts to be somewhat ineffective and unduly difficult. Fourth, students reported their mentors provided primarily psychosocial, rather than career support. And fifth, proteges characterized their mentoring relationships as extremely positive and satisfying. Results throughout are, for the most part, independent of both protege and mentor demographics (including ethnicity). (Contains 45 references; a table of data is appended.) (Author)

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GRADUATE STUDENT/FACULTY MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS: WHO GETS MENTORED, HOW IT HAPPENS, AND TO WHAT END

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Running Head: **MENTORING** 1

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Graduate Student/Faculty Mentoring Relationships: Who Gets Mentored, How It Happens, and To What End

Abstract

Given the importance of mentoring in the academic context and in light of the weaknesses of previous research, this study proposed five objectives. Analyses of surveys from 145 students across 12 universities and diverse disciplines, revealed first of all, a demographic profile of the typical graduate student protege and faculty mentor. Second, ten diverse communication strategies emerged that demonstrate how students initiate a mentoring relationship. Third, protege evaluations of their initiation attempts revealed their efforts to be somewhat ineffective and unduly difficult. Fourth, students reported their mentors to provide primarily psychosocial, rather than career support. And fifth, proteges characterized their mentoring relationships as extremely positive and satisfying. Results throughout are, for the most part, independent of both protege and mentor demographics (including ethnicity).

Student/Faculty Mentoring Relationships:

Who Gets Mentored, How It Happens, and To What End

Successful student experiences in and beyond graduate school are frequently tied to mentoring relationships with faculty. Mentoring is an effective way for students to establish productive connections with professors. Without the guidance of a good mentor, the graduate student's road to an advanced degree becomes unnecessarily anxious and difficult. The actual mentoring process involves a seasoned professional who counsels, guides and tutors a protege who is either a newcomer to or a trainee in the profession (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Ekrut & Mokros, 1984; Gerstein, 1985; Kram, 1985, 1988; Krupp, 1985; Levinson, 1978). Within the academic context, that professional is a graduate faculty member who provides such support for a graduate student protégé. Unlike assigned academic advisors who simply direct students' course of study and other procedural matters, mentors go beyond by fulfilling other important functions for their proteges.

Mentoring can benefit the graduate student when mentors provide invaluable information on department politics, regulations, unspoken rules and other faculty (Brown, 1985; Kogler-Hill, Bahniuk, & Dobos, 1989; Phillips, 1979). Such relationships also aid in increasing student publication productivity (Cronan-Hillix, T., Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, W., & Davidson, 1986), developing specific professional skills (Bova & Phillips, 1984), securing future placement in quality research

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universities (Blackburn, Chapman, & Cameron, 1981; Cameron, 1978) and making contacts and gaining visibility (Moore, 1982). If utilized properly, mentoring relationships can be crucial to the success and advancement of proteges in the academic setting.

Despite the obvious benefits of mentoring, very little is known about who gets mentored, how these relationships are initiated, and what distinguishes satisfactory from unsatisfactory academic mentoring experiences. A critical review of the literature suggests a number of shortcomings relative to understanding mentoring in the academic setting. For one thing, research has focused on superior/subordinate (DeWine, 1983; Fagenson, 1988, 1989; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1988; Levinson, 1978; Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988; Zey, 1984) and senior/junior faculty mentoring relationships (Blackwell, 1989; Blackburn, Behymer, & Hall, 1978; Cameron & Blackburn, 1981; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Hall & Sandler, 1983; Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1993; Kogler-Hill, Bahniuk, & Dobos, 1989; Moore, 1982), almost to the exclusion of graduate student/faculty mentoring experiences (Cronan-Hillix, et al., 1986; Ekrut & Mokros, 1984; Rice & Brown, 1990).

Additionally, the literature suffers from a series of methodological flaws. For example, researchers have investigated advising relationships by employing unmatched samples of mentors and proteges (Nadler & Nadler, 1996). Also problematic, the seminal and most often cited work on mentoring (Kram, 1988) is based on a sample size of only eighteen mentor/protege pairs who

all worked for a single organization. Small, nonrepresentative samples are characteristic of a number of other mentoring studies as well (Bullis & Wackernagel-Bach, 1989; Ervin, 1993; Kalbfleisch & Keyton, 1995; Kram, 1985, 1988; Moore, 1982; Prehm & Isaacson, 1985; Schmidt & Wolfe, 1980; Schockett & Haring-Hidore, 1985). An outcome of these methodological problems is the research reporting that women and minorities have great difficulty obtaining mentors or that these groups experience less satisfaction when they do obtain mentors (Adams, 1992; Brown, 1985; Burke, 1984; Collins, 1983; Farris & Ragin, 1981; Keyton & Kalbfleisch, 1993; Noe, 1988; Yoder, 1984). Although such conclusions may be true, as yet they lack a solid empirical base.

In all fairness, one reason for these less than substantive findings resides in the difficulty of accessing participants who have been mentored. In many studies, reported return rates are low, or researchers have relied on a convenience sample or a descriptive case study approach that limits external validity.

Given the importance of mentoring in the academic setting, and in light of the weaknesses of previous research illustrated here, this study focused on five primary objectives. First, we were interested in discovering who gets mentored and who does the mentoring. Even though Hunt and Michael (1983) outlined descriptive characteristics of mentorships in organizations, no such characterizations have been articulated for academe. So, we proposed to define empirically a profile of academic mentors and proteges.

Second, we investigated what students say and do in order to get mentored in graduate school. From a relationship development perspective, Kram (1988) identified an initiation phase. However, Kram's explanation of initiation fails to identify any specific skills, behaviors, or communication strategies that potential proteges can use to trigger the genesis of a mentoring relationship. Thus, we wanted to know what specific strategies students use to obtain a mentor.

Third, given the apparent lack of mentoring in academe, we wanted to know how easy or difficult graduate students find the mentoring initiation process. Some studies indicate that women may encounter more difficulty in forming mentoring relationships (Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1991; Keyton & Kalbfleisch, 1993) while others indicate that minorities in general have difficulty accessing mentors (Blackwell, 1989; Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1991). Thus, we asked, do students perceive targeting and approaching potential mentors as problematic? And, is difficulty in obtaining a mentor a function of students' gender and ethnicity?

Our fourth objective was to identify characteristics of established faculty/student mentoring relationships. Kram (1985, 1988) and Schockett and Haring-Hidore (1985) found that mentors offer two primary types of support to their proteges: career and psychosocial. Psychosocial functions enhance proteges' sense of "competence, identity, and social effectiveness in personal and professional roles" (Kram, 1988, p. 32). Career functions, conversely, facilitate proteges' learning, exposure, and skill

development (Kram, 1988). Taken together, these personal and professional tools assist in the career advancement of the proteges. Consequently, we sought to determine whether the career and psychosocial functions that operate within corporate mentoring relationships similarly characterize academic ones.

Finally, some literature casts doubt on the usefulness of even having a mentoring relationship (Bullis & Wackernagel-Bach, 1989). They suggest that ineffective, dissatisfied mentors may negatively influence proteges' perceptions of their jobs or satisfaction with the organization more generally. The idea that mentoring experiences could be less than satisfactory for proteges requires empirical investigation. Thus, we wanted to know if proteges in general are more or less satisfied with their mentoring experiences.

Method

Participants

The low response rates obtained in prior research suggest that accessing mentored graduate students is problematic. Anticipating this difficulty then, we relied on both random and purposive sampling techniques. Employing random sampling, 500 questionnaires were sent to full-time graduate students at a large western university. This procedure resulted in a return of 122 with only 49 participants indicating they had a mentor. Purposive sampling resulted in a greater return rate of mentored participants. Similar to stratification sampling, the purposive technique selects nonrandomly only those individuals with the

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specific stratified characteristic under study; in this case, mentored students (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991). Using this procedure, questionnaires were sent to eleven faculty members (F=6; M=5) at ten universities who distributed the questionnaires only to mentored graduate students. This process increased the sample size to 145 mentored participants (82 females, 59 males, 4 did not indicate). The mean age for the sample was 29.82 years (range 21-54). A variety of academic disciplines were represented by the proteges, including heatlh sciences, fine arts, education, social/behavioral sciences, natural sciences, business, and the humanities.

Seventy-six percent indicated that they were Euroamerican/White; 9% Latino/a; 4% African American; 2% Asian American; 11.7% other. Additionally, 60% were single; 37.4% were married; and 4.1% did not indicate. Eighty percent reported having no children; 7.6% one child; 11% two or more children; 1.4% did not indicate.

The average number of years in a graduate program was 2.2. The majority (58%) was writing a thesis or dissertation, while the remaining were completing comprehensive exams, a project, or some other assignment. Sixty-three percent were teaching or research assistants. Finally, 18% were working on a doctorate. Of the remaining M.A. students, 31.7% said they were planning to pursue a doctorate; 22.5% were not, and 25.4% were undecided.

Graduate student participants were asked to respond to items describing their faculty mentors. Fifty-six percent of faculty

mentors were male, 43% female, and 1% did not indicate. Fifty-one percent were full professors, 24.1% associate , 12.4% assistant; 9.7% instructors/lecturers; and 4 did not indicate. The mean age for mentors was reported to be 45.52 (range 31-65).

Thirty-eight percent of mentors were their proteges' thesis advisers, 29% were teachers in the participants' departments, 15.2% were graduate advisers, 10.3% were teachers outside their proteges' departments, and 6.2% indicated other or failed to indicate. Nearly all (88.6%) mentors were reported to be Euroamerican/White, 2.8% African American, 2.8% Latino/a; 8% other; and 3 did not indicate.

Instrumentation

Students were provided with a modified version of Kram's (1988) definition of mentoring. The definition was rewritten to describe an academic mentoring relationship:

> A faculty member in your department, program, or field, who provides you with emotional support, career counseling, information and advice, professional sponsorship, and helps you network with key professionals in your field. (This faculty member may or may not be your graduate adviser).

Employing this definition as their response referent, participants were asked to complete open-ended and scaled response items.

Mentor initiation strategies. In order to identify communication strategies students use to initiate mentoring, they were asked to describe what they said or did to persuade a

faculty member to mentor them. Of the 145 participants, 119 reported using initiation strategies. A total of 283 discrete initiation attempts were reported (an average of 2.38 per student).

All 283 descriptions were included in the coding procedures. This content analytic process included five stages. Stage One: Two coders unitized the raw data into discrete communication tactics. Stage Two: These coders independently coded each unit and placed them into conceptually similar categories. Stage Three: Both of the coders reread all of the strategies within each of the categories to check for internal consistency. Tentative labels were then assigned to each category. Stage Four: Coders reread the tactics in each category, and made adjustments and revisions.

Stage five involved two additional coders who re-categorized a sample of units randomly selected from each of the categories. Percent of unit-by-unit agreement between the original coders and the two additional coders ranged from 75% to 100% depending on the particular category. Intercoder agreement among all coders, assessed by unit-by-unit agreement was .91 (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Protege evaluations of strategy use. Proteges evaluated strategy use based on effectiveness and difficulty of the initiation approach they used to persuade a professor to mentor them. The stimulus for the effectiveness scale read, "How would you rate the approach you used to persuade this faculty member to mentor you?" Semantic differential-type response options

included, "Appropriate/Inappropriate," "Not at all Effective/Extremely Effective," and "Useful/Useless." Response options ranged from 1 to 7, with responses recoded so that higher scores reflected greater effectiveness. Principal components factor analysis indicated a single-factor solution. Alpha reliability was estimated at .96 (M = 9.31, sd = 8.29).

The stimulus for the difficulty scale read, "How difficult was it for you to initiate this mentoring relationship?" followed by response selections, "Easy/Difficult," "Simple/Hard," "Tough/Effortless," "Awkward/Smooth." Responses were recoded so that higher scores reflected more difficult initiation attempts. Once again, principal components factor analysis indicated a single factor solution with alpha reliability estimated at .87 (M = 21.61, sd = 6.13).

Career and psychosocial mentoring functions. A modified version of Ragins and McFarlin's Mentor Role Item (MRI) Scale (1990) assessed protege perceptions of career and psychosocial functions in the academic setting. For example, the word "organization" was changed to "department" in order to more accurately depict the academic setting. The original Likert-type scale included 32 items measuring 6 dimensions of career functions and 5 dimensions of psychosocial functions.

Students' responses were submitted to principal components factor analysis. Results indicated a two-factor solution with thirteen items split across the two factors. Because these items failed to meet a liberal 50/30 criterion, they were eliminated

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from subsequent analyses. Responses to the remaining 20 items resulted in a two-factor solution (54.5% of variance accounted for; interfactor correlation = .32). These factors were consistent with Ragins and McFarlan's original two functions. Factor One, *Psychosocial Functions* (M = 54.30, sd = 10.83) consisted of ten items with an alpha reliability at .91. Factor Two, *Career Functions* (M = 44.70, sd = 11.69) also consisted of ten items with an alpha of .88.

Relationship satisfaction. Participants were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the work and personal dimensions of their mentoring relationships. The stimulus for the work relationship scale read, "Overall, I would characterize my work relationship with my mentor as..." followed by bipolar response adjectives "Good/Bad," "Painful/Pleasurable," "Meaningful/ Meaningless," "Unproductive/Productive," and "Constructive/ Destructive." Response options ranged from 1 to 7, with responses recoded so that higher scores indicated greater satisfaction. Principal components factor analysis indicated a parsimonious, single-factor solution with all items loading on the first unrotated factor with alpha reliability estimated at .87 (M = 31.72, sd = 8.29).

The stimulus for the personal relationship satisfaction items read, "Overall, I would characterize my personal relationship with my mentor as..." followed by bipolar response adjectives "Personal/Impersonal," "Close/Distant," "Cold/Warm,"

"Tense/Relaxed," and "Friendly/Unhappy." Response selections ranged from 1 to 7, with responses recoded so that higher scores reflected greater satisfaction. Principal components factor analysis revealed a single unrotated factor with reliability estimated at .85 (M = 34.81, sd = 7.17).

Results

Objective One: Profile of a Graduate Student/Faculty Mentoring Relationship

The first objective of this study was to generate a profile of graduate student/faculty mentoring relationships. Protege self-reported demographic data were relied upon in order to develop this profile.

Based on our sample obtained across a variety of academic departments in twelve major U.S. universities, we can deduce empirically a profile of graduate students who have been or are currently been mentored and the faculty who mentor them. Specifically, the majority of proteges are Euroamerican/White, with primarily Euroamerican/White mentors. Female proteges outnumber males; however, more male faculty serve as mentors than females. Most graduate student proteges are single and have no children. Most academic proteges write (or intend to write) a thesis or dissertation. The majority of graduate student proteges plan to pursue a doctorate or are in the progress of completing one. Academic proteges are likely to be teaching or research assistants.

Graduate students most frequently target middle-aged full professors as mentors. Furthermore, students usually select a professor from their department who serves as their thesis or dissertation adviser. Mentorships between graduate students and their faculty mentors typically last 13 to 18 months.

Objective Two: Strategy Identification and Selection

From the coding procedures employed, ten primary categories of protege initiation strategies were derived (see Table 1).

[Table One about here]

The first and most frequently cited category that emerged from protege self-reports is *Ensure Contact With Target* (n = 54, 20%). Students who employ this strategy find ways to be visible and accessible to the target faculty member in three primary ways: First, they *prearrange a working relationship* by enrolling in the university or program where the target resides. Or, students *intentionally enroll in the target's courses*. Finally, graduate students *frequently call or meet with the prospective mentor*. In these ways, the student ensures that the professor will recognize him or her as interested, assertive, and persistent.

The next most frequently cited category that emerged from the data is *Search for Similar Interests* (n = 45, 16%). Students utilizing this category attempt to discover personal and professional areas of common interest with the target faculty member. In this way, they hope to discover similar work and personal interests on which to build a mentoring relationship.

Category three, *Seek Counsel from Target*, occurs when graduate students seek advice or counsel from a specific faculty member (n = 38, 13%). Two types of counsel were derived from the data: *personal* and *professional* counseling. The fourth category, *Appeal to Target Directly*, is utilized when a student employs a direct request to be mentored (n = 34, 12%). In other words, students who use strategies from this category simply ask the target if she or he will advise or mentor them.

Students who utilize strategies from category five, *Provide Work Assistance*, serve as research or teaching assistants to the target (n = 34, 12%). These individuals engage in work-related activities to help support the target, and consequently, illustrate those skills that would benefit the target. The sixth category, labeled *Present a Competent Self*, contains tactics that entail students' attempts to excel in class or academic work (n = 24, 9%). As result, the student hopes to make a favorable impression on the target.

This category is followed by *Assume it Will "Just Happen"*, which describes situations in which graduate students claim that their mentoring relationships naturally evolved over time (n = 20, 7%). In these quasi-attempts to initiate mentoring, neither the target nor the student explicitly defined the relationship as a mentorship. The eighth category, labeled *Concede Control*, is utilized when a student acquiesces to faculty or program attempts

to institute mentoring (n = 18, 6%). This is done either through program assignment or faculty solicitation.

Category nine, *Venerate the Target*, is comprised of tactics which communicate respect and admiration for the target (n = 12, 4%). As a result of showing respect for the professor, students hope to work with the faculty member and eventually initiate a mentoring relationship. The least most frequently used category was *Disclose Personal Self*. This category encompasses initiation attempts in which students reveal personal information about themselves in order to become closer to the target mentor (n = 4, 2%).

Analyses to determine whether mentor or protege demographic characteristics influenced students' initiation strategy usage indicated no relationships other than those due to Type 1 error.

Objective Three: Protege Evaluations of Strategy Use

The third objective of this investigation was to examine proteges' evaluations of their strategy use based on perceived difficulty and effectiveness. To determine students' perceptions of overall effectiveness and difficulty, two separate one-sample tests were computed. Specifically, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests (K-S z) were computed to compare the actual to the theoretical means. Results indicated that students rated their approach to persuading a faculty member to mentor them as significantly less effective than would be expected by chance (M = 8.9, s.d. = 6.5, K-S z = 2.48, p < .0001). And, students rated the difficulty of

their initiation attempt as significantly more difficult than would be expected by chance (M = 21.31, $s.d.$ = 6.16, $K\text{-}S\ z$ = 1.6, $p < .01$).

Subsequent tests were computed to determine whether protege perceptions of effectiveness and difficulty were associated with relevant mentor and protege characteristics. A series of one-way ANOVAs revealed no significant differences for protege sex, ethnicity, year in school, or assistantship status on protege perceptions of effectiveness. Only protege academic plan was a significant predictor of effectiveness (F (3/121) = 10.00, $p < .0001$). Multiple comparison tests revealed that those students already in doctoral programs (M = 15.04) perceived their initiation attempts to be more effective than those students who planned to pursue a doctorate in the future (M = 7.24), were unsure of their future plans (M = 8.52), or who indicated that they would not pursue the Ph.D. (M = 7.3). No mentor characteristics had significant effects on protege perceptions of effectiveness.

Similarly, a series of one-way ANOVAs resulted in only one significant effect on protege perceptions of difficulty, protege ethnicity (F (3/114) = 2.707, $p < .05$). Multiple comparisons tests revealed that African Americans (M = 13.25) perceived initiation significantly easier than Euroamericans/Whites (M = 21.59), Latino/as (M = 21.25), and Asian Americans (M = 22.67). No mentor characteristics had significant effects on protege perceptions of difficulty.

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Objective Four: Functions Provided by Academic Mentoring Relationships

The fourth objective of this study was to examine whether graduate student proteges would report receiving a greater number of career than psychosocial functions. Protege responses to the Mentor Role Items scale were submitted to a paired samples t-test. Results indicated a significant difference between the means for career functions and psychosocial functions (t = 9.30, df = 144, p < .0001, accounting for 38% of the variance). An examination of the means revealed that graduate students experience more psychosocial functions (M = 54.04) in their mentorships than career functions (M = 44.70).

Secondarily, this objective sought to determine whether protege perceptions of satisfaction with their professional relationships are a product of one or the other or of both mentor functions. Employing multiple regression analysis, career functions and social functions provided by mentors were entered into the equation as the predictor variables and work satisfaction was the single criterion. Results indicated a significant overall relationship (F = 5.58, df = 2/140, p < .01, adjusted R^2 = .06). An examination of the beta weights and corresponding t-tests revealed that only the occurrence of psychosocial functions contributed significantly to students' satisfaction with their professional relationships with faculty mentors (beta = .22, t = 2.45, p < .01). Career functions provided by mentors did not contribute significantly to protege

satisfaction with their professional relationships (beta = .10, t = 1.10, p > .27).

To determine whether protege satisfaction with their personal relationships with faculty mentors is a product of one or the other or of both mentoring functions, a similar multiple regression analysis was performed. Career functions and psychosocial functions provided by mentors were the predictor variables, and protege satisfaction with the personal dimension of their mentorships was the criterion variable. Results indicated an overall significant relationship (F = 20.50, df = 2/140, p < .0001, adjusted R^2 = .22). An examination of the beta weights and corresponding t-tests indicated that both psychosocial functions (beta = .38, t = 4.75, p < .0001) and career functions (beta = .17, t = 2.09, p < .04) provided by faculty mentors contribute significantly to protege satisfaction with their personal relationships with those mentors.

Supplementary analyses indicated no significant effects of protege demographic characteristics on perceptions of career or psychosocial functions.

Objective Five: Protege Satisfaction With Mentored Experiences

The final primary objective of this study was to determine how satisfied graduate student proteges are with their mentoring relationships. To determine students' perceptions of overall work and personal satisfaction, two separate one-sample tests were computed. Specifically, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests (K-S z) were computed to compare the actual to the theoretical means.

Results indicated that students are more satisfied with both their working (M = 31.72, $s.d.$ = 8.29, $K\text{-}S\ z$ = 1.42, $p < .05$) and personal (M = 34.81, $s.d.$ = 7.17, $K\text{-}S\ z$ = 2.01, $p < .001$) relationships with their mentors than would be expected by chance.

A MANOVA was computed to determine whether work and personal satisfaction were a function of one or more protege demographic characteristics. Significant effects were found for year in school on work satisfaction (F = 4.03 , df = 2/110, $p < .05$). A follow-up multiple comparisons test indicated higher work satisfaction for students in their second year (M = 33.61) than all other groups (1st year, M = 32.05; 3rd year+, M = 28.08). Significant effects were also found for academic plan on work satisfaction (F = 3.31, df = 3/132, $p < .05$). A follow-up multiple comparison test indicated that work satisfaction is significantly lower for students currently in a doctoral program (M = 27.19) than for students in a Master's program (plan to pursue a Ph.D., M = 33.11; do not plan to pursue a Ph.D., M = 32.58; unsure, M = 32.53).

Once again, mentor demographic characteristics had no significant effects on protege perceptions of work and personal satisfaction with their mentored relationships.

Discussion

Even though the benefits of academic mentoring are well-documented both intuitively and empirically, very little is known about who is most frequently mentored, how students obtain a

mentor, and what functions it serves. The research that does exist focuses primarily on corporate mentoring relationships, and to a lesser extent, on academic relationships. In either case, much of the work is plagued by methodological problems. In response to these inadequacies, we undertook the present study.

Our first objective was to develop empirically a profile of graduate student proteges and their faculty mentors. The profile indicated by our data reveals the typical graduate student protege to be Euroamerican, single, childless, and approximately thirty years of age. Moreover, the typical protege is either writing or intends to write a thesis/dissertation, planning to pursue or is in the process of completing a doctorate, and serving as a teaching or research assistant. Contrary to previous studies that suggest that women have difficulty obtaining mentors, our data, representing graduate students from a number of academic disciplines across twelve universities, are predominated by female proteges. While this finding is reassuring, the data concerning ethnic minorities are not so positive. African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans and other ethnic groups remain excluded from mentoring in the academy. Ironically, compared to all other cultural groups examined in this study (including Euroamerican), African American students indicated that it was relatively easy to obtain a mentor. Apparently then, when given the opportunity African Americans are quite capable of obtaining a mentor.

The typical mentor is male, middle-aged (45 years), a full

professor, and serves as the protege's thesis or dissertation adviser. This profile seems logical, given that these senior faculty, who are more established and networked in their field, have the potential to do students more good than junior faculty. Additionally, senior faculty may be more available and responsive to working with graduate students than probationary faculty preoccupied with their own retention, tenure, and promotion processes. As for the gender bias apparent in this profile of graduate mentors, the most logical explanation is that there are more male than female faculty at the senior rank. Alternatively, graduate students may perceive that male faculty exercise more power than female professors, and thus will be more useful to them.

The second objective of this study was to identify strategies graduate students employ to initiate mentorships with faculty. Ten diverse strategies were inductively derived (see Table 1). These results indicate that students need not rely on one generic approach to initiate a mentoring relationship; rather, they can select from a wide variety of message choices and behaviors to facilitate interaction with target mentors. These data further suggest that graduate students need not wait for mentoring to "just happen." Instead, armed with these strategies, students can proactively select the communicative behaviors that best maximize their chances for mentoring. An overwhelming majority of students utilized more than one tactic in attempting to interact with a target professor. Consequently,

repeated initiation attempts are warranted.

The most frequently used strategy proved to be "Ensure Contact With Target" (see Table 1). Graduate students who use this strategy initiate a mentoring relationship by being visible and accessible to their target mentor. Specifically, students who use this approach may want to enroll in the target's courses, and maintain weekly face-to-face or telephone contact with the target. Additionally, students frequently employed "Search for Similar Interests." They made attempts to discover common areas of personal and professional interest with the target. Students selecting this strategy may want to discuss research ideas and overlapping extra-curricular activities with the target. Interestingly, student strategy constructions were not dependent on any single student or target demographic characteristic. That is, strategy use was independent of student or target sex, ethnicity, age, or marital status -- or professor academic rank and advising status.

In reaching objective three, we discovered that overall graduate students' attempts to initiate a mentoring relationship were especially difficult. Along the same line, they rated their approach to persuade the target to mentor them as relatively ineffective. Despite these negative perceptions, recall that this sample consisted of only mentored participants. Thus, they were in fact successful in obtaining a mentor. Perhaps their unfamiliarity with the initiation process, coupled with their uncertainty about how to proceed, influenced their attributions

about their initiation attempts. The fact that many of them used multiple tactics suggests that they may have been unsure about the use of any single initiation attempt. Adding further support to this interpretation, doctoral students, having gained confidence from their previous experiences with faculty relationships, found their approach to be more effective than master's students.

Another interpretation of these findings is that graduate students may perceive faculty generally to be unapproachable or resistant to mentoring relationships. Increasing sensitivity toward legal issues such as sexual harassment and the ramifications of inappropriate relationships with graduate students may dissuade faculty from being responsive to potential graduate student proteges. Moreover, faculty who previously have had negative mentoring experiences with graduate students may consciously or unconsciously communicate that they are uninterested in working closely with students. Alternatively, students new to an intense research/working climate may erroneously attribute faculty aloofness to a lack of interest in mentoring when in fact these professors may be preoccupied with tasks and other responsibilities at work. This line of reasoning could account for students' reported use of multiple initiation attempts and tactics; for instance, if a student fails to gain the target's attention at work, he or she may attempt to initiate in a social setting.

Thus, our data suggest that graduate students be persistent

in attempting to obtain a mentor, even when they perceive their efforts as difficult and ineffective. Before concluding that their attempts are futile, students should utilize a variety of tactics from across all of the initiation strategies in a number of contexts, including ones away from the pressure of the office. Moreover, these findings send a message to faculty who are interested in mentoring but might not be aware that students perceive the initiation process to be difficult. Professors should attempt to demonstrate open communication styles, practice verbal and nonverbal immediacy in their classrooms, and make themselves available for informal advising. Additionally, faculty could be proactive in attracting graduate student proteges by advertising an "open-door" office policy, creating social opportunities for interaction with students, and generally communicating explicit interest in working with students. And, importantly, we would encourage mentors who have had negative experiences with proteges to be persistent and open to new relationships: Graduate students need effective mentors. In turn, most students are gratified by the experience and consequently will mentor others.

Interestingly, African American students reported much less difficulty approaching faculty for mentoring than Euroamericans and all other ethnic groups. Consistent with their cultural orientation, African Americans may be more comfortable in situations demanding assertive behaviors. (For an overview of the literature on cultural styles of communicating, see Kearney &

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Plax, 1996, pp. 47-75.) It appears then, that it's not for the lack of trying that many African Americans fail to get mentored in graduate school. In fact, our data suggest that African Americans find it relatively easy to obtain a mentor. The fact is, so few African Americans are enrolled in graduate school and available for mentoring.

Consistent with the research on corporate mentorships, our findings indicate that graduate students experience more psychosocial functions in their mentorships than career functions. We might conclude from these results that graduate students may not realize the actual amount of career support they receive from their mentors. Take, for example, the professional conference where networking and promotion of the protege often occur in social gatherings. Such exposure and sponsorship during social events may not be easily recognized by proteges as career support.

Alternatively, we might conclude that mentors may not offer their proteges as much professional support as is necessary. Perhaps some mentors and/or proteges emphasize affinity and interpersonal bonding in their efforts to maintain a positive, close relationship. Although important for relationship development, this personal dimension may interfere with the mentor's ability to objectively evaluate, criticize, and direct the student. As interpersonal affinity increases, the amount of career functioning could decrease.

A third interpretation lies in the demographic profile of

the proteges. The majority of the proteges mentored in this study was single and had no children. These students may need and want more psychosocial emotional support from their mentors than proteges married with children. Additionally, the fact that most were TA's or RA's provides them with increased opportunities for social penetration, resulting in potentially more intimate, psychosocially-based mentorships.

Apparently, psychosocial functions also play a primary role in students' satisfaction with their mentor personally, and to a lesser extent, satisfaction with their mentor professionally. Specifically, results indicated that psychosocial was the better predictor of personal satisfaction than career functioning. And for professional satisfaction, only the psychosocial function of the relationship was important. Despite the emphasis on professional propriety and social distancing, these results offer support for both professors and students developing social, personal bonds. If psychosocial functions predominate, the work dimension of their relationship will be more satisfying.

Our fifth and final objective was to determine how graduate students perceived their overall mentoring experiences. Good news: Mentored students in this sample characterized their work relationships with their mentors as extremely pleasurable, meaningful and productive. Similarly, they characterized their personal relationships with their mentors as very close, warm, relaxed, and friendly. In other words, proteges were highly satisfied with their working and personal mentored relationships.

According to these students, mentoring is an overall enjoyable and meaningful experience.

Differences in satisfaction emerged on certain demographic characteristics. Even so, means obtained suggest that students remain satisfied across all categories. Students most satisfied with their working relationship were second year students (as opposed to first and third year groups); students least (but still highly) satisfied were doctoral students. No such differences occurred for student characteristics and their personal satisfaction. And no differences in either personal or work satisfaction were obtained for mentor characteristics.

Conclusion

We began with a critical review of the mentoring literature noting the shortcomings and subsequently, outlining our objectives for this study. In meeting our five objectives, we now have a better idea of who gets mentored, how it happens, and to what end. Of course, we must caution readers to interpret our results with a critical eye. In this study we assumed that the mentoring process is similar for both M.A. and Ph.D. students when, in fact, the process may be influenced substantially by each group's special needs, concerns, and goals. It's also important to note that we only examined mentored graduate students in this study. It would be meaningful to look at the profile of the typical nonmentored student, what strategies (if any) they use to initiate a mentored relationship, and what goals or functions they perceive potential mentors to serve. With

these data, we would be able to compare and contrast mentored with nonmentored graduate students. Moreover, we might examine those explanations that nonmentored students give for not obtaining a mentor. Perhaps they do not know how to go about initiating a mentoring relationship; they are unable to identify with a faculty member in their program; no senior faculty are available for or interested in mentoring; or perhaps these students do not feel the need to be mentored.

Finally, like others before us, we have presumed that mentoring relationships that are satisfying to proteges result in desirable outcomes and those that are dissatisfying result in negative outcomes. This may not be the case. Students who move too quickly into mentored relationships may discover later that theirs was not a good match and, for a variety of reasons, are unable to disengage. Satisfied proteges may learn too late that their mentors' advice failed to prepare them for employment opportunities. Formerly dissatisfied proteges may be surprised to learn that their mentors from graduate school were more instrumental in their subsequent career successes than they would have predicted. We need to examine then the relative effectiveness of the mentoring relationship over time.

Moroever, satisfaction may be only one of several indices of mentoring relationship effectiveness or success -- and it may not be the most appropriate or most important one. Consider for instance, the following potential indices of mentoring effectiveness for the protege: first and subsequent academic

posts, publication record, instructional innovativeness, teaching evaluations, collegiality, service to the university and community, participation in professional organizations, tenure and promotion, and subsequent mentoring opportunties that former proteges provide.

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Table 1. A Typology of Graduate Student Initiation Strategies: Frequencies and Percentages.

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1. ENSURE CONTACT WITH TARGET Student finds ways to be visible and accessible to target in the following ways:	54	20%
A. Prearrange Working Relationship (n=10) "I came to this university to specifically study under her." "I came to work with this professor." "I applied to the university based on the fact that he worked there."		
B. Intentional Course Enrollment (n=21) "I took three courses with him." "I strategically enrolled in his class." "I took several of his classes and got to know him better."		
C. Frequent Exposure (n=23) "I keep in touch with him." "I meet with him every week." "I keep meeting with him on a regular basis."		
2. SEARCH FOR SIMILAR INTERESTS Student attempts to discover personal and professional areas of common interest with target. "I discussed my interests which coincided with hers." "I mentioned something we had in common." "I explained my interests and goals." "I brought my thesis idea to him."	45	16%

3. SEEK COUNSEL FROM TARGET — 38 — 13.4%
Student seeks advice or counsel from a specific faculty member. Two types of counsel emerged from the data:

A. Professional (n=34)
"I asked him to advise me on courses to take."
"I explained my assignment and asked for his advice."
"I asked her advice about graduate schools."
"I explained that I needed career direction."

B. Personal (n=4)
"I asked how to balance my personal life with all the the demands of graduate school."
"I discussed problems I was having with others."

4. APPEAL TO TARGET DIRECTLY — 34 — 12%
Employ a direct request to be mentored. Student simply asks the target if she/he will advise/mentor.

"I asked her to chair my committee."
"I asked him to direct my thesis."
"I asked him to sponsor me."
"I asked him to be my creative project advisor."
"I used explicit communication to express my desire to be mentored and assisted."

5. PROVIDE WORK ASSISTANCE — 34 — 12%
Student serves as a research or teaching assistant to the target. Engages in work-related activities to help support the target.

"I asked him if I could help him do research in the laboratory."
"I worked with him on several different projects."
"I taught lab sections for her class."
"I agreed to work as an assistant on the journal she edits."

24 8.5%

6. PRESENT A COMPETENT SELF
Student attempts to excel in class or work in order to make a favorable impression on the target.

"I go out of my way to be responsible."
"I worked hard on class assignments."
"I asserted myself as a competent student in his class."
"I spoke in class frequently."
"I attempted to meet her standards."

20 7%

7. ASSUME IT WILL "JUST HAPPEN"
Student claims that the relationship naturally evolved over time. Neither the target nor the student explicitly defined the relationship as a mentorship.

"There was never any specific request on my part. It merely became a mutual understanding."
"We never had a formal conversation about a mentored relationship."
"We worked well together, became friends, and now he is my mentor."

18 6.4%

8. CONCEDE CONTROL
Student acquiesces to faculty or program attempts to institute mentoring.

A. Program Assignment (n=11)
"He was assigned to me."
"He was the professor assigned to me for guidance when I first arrived."
"My mentor was assigned to me."

B. Faculty Solicitation (n=7)
"He offered me an assistantship and I took it."
"I started the program because he approached me and said that I could do a Ph.D."
"I accepted it when he offered me an excellent project."

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9. VENERATE THE TARGET Student communicates respect and admiration for the target. "I responded positively to the faculty member." "I admired her work and began talking to her during class breaks." "I thanked him for all of his support." "I showed interest in his research."	12	4.2%
10. DISCLOSE PERSONAL SELF Student reveals personal information about self in order to become closer to the target. "I told her about personal aspects of my life." "I confided in him about my obstacles." "The more I trusted her, the more I opened up, and the more our relationship grew."	4	1.4%
TOTAL	283	100%

Of the 145 mentored proteges, 119 specified actual strategies they used to initiate a mentored relationship with a faculty member. Of those 119 students, many reported using multiple techniques (total tactics reported = 283, average tactic per student = 2.38.